

WASHINGTON DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY

AGRICULTURAL BURNING RULE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

May 25, 2005 10:00 – 4:00

Washington Department of Transportation, Spokane Office

SUMMARY

In attendance

Cindy Thompson	American Lung Association
Bob Gore	Department of Agriculture
Bill Johnston	WSU- Crop & Soil Sciences
Michael Bush	WSU- Extension
Jay Penner	Wheat Growers
Dave Lauer	Clean Air Authorities (BCAA)
Jeff Schibel	Irrigated Community
Grant Pfeifer	Department of Ecology
Larry Cochran	WA Conservation Districts
Rachael Osborn	Save our Summers
John Cornwall	Grass Growers

Members Absent

Sverre Vedal, MD	Public Health
Mike Ingham	Alfalfa Seed Growers

Staff

Melissa McEachron	Ecology
Sarah Rees	Ecology
Lori Isenberg	facilitator

Meeting Objectives

- Identify what is working and what could be improved regarding monitoring, metering, and standards.
- Provide Ecology direction on key elements they would like to see in the rules regarding these topics.

Action Items

- See wrap-up section of meeting summary

Opening

Lori Isenberg welcomed the group, gave a brief overview of the purpose of the meeting and conducted introductions.

Monitoring Presentation and Discussion

- Grant showed the location of the smoke-net monitors on a map on the website and explained the meaning of the different colors. Grant explained that putting monitors in rural areas is a somewhat new methodology to get an accurate picture of air quality throughout the area.
- The group then watched the real time monitors and the reports that were being generated.
- Grant then showed the data tables and charts that obtain and calculate the information from the monitors. He explained that the spikes indicate an air quality concern. When Ecology sees the spikes they conduct a thorough investigation to identify what caused the spikes. Ecology is becoming more aware of the correlation between the spikes on the chart and the

number of complaint calls they receive. Ecology now has 5 years worth of data from which they can draw. Ecology also tracks when forest fires are impacting the air quality.

- Grant passed out a chart showing the Frequency of Hourly Values for Walla Walla.

There was productive interaction among the committee members and staff during the discussions; key points below:

- What is working well?
 - Quality data
 - Locations seem good.
- What could be improved?
 - Increased number of monitoring sites
 - Review locations to make sure they are representative. Respond to areas of concern. Review geographic dispersion.
 - Increased analysis of the spikes to identify reasons (point source contribution, etc.)
 - Share data gathered with health agencies.
 - Consider using portable monitors (being done already).

Standards Presentation and Discussion

Grant explained there are no numerical standard in place at this time. However, Ecology is using certain practices that might be considered a qualitative or definitional standard. The federal government established the national ambient air quality standard. Grant shared the numerical standards and “targets” that have been established in other States and Canada.

Metering Presentation and Discussion

Karen Wood presented information on the metering program. She explained it has evolved since the Settlement Agreement. Some of the discussions topics included the items below:

- The decision of Burn or No burn does not take into consideration the source of the smoke.
- GIS map shows all the burning permits on a daily basis to identify acres available to be burned that day.
- Also take into consideration special needs-i.e. SSAs, wind direction, etc.
- All hot spots need to be considered: ag burning, I-90, and industrial areas.
- Does DOE have an interagency agreement to notify in regards to air quality: BLM, DNR,USFS, other states?
- Spike accountability on web site explaining why the spike occurred- fire, farm, USFS, etc.

There was productive interaction among the committee members and staff during the discussions; key points below:

- What is working well?
 - Team is effective.
- What could be improved?
 - Post burn reporting
 - Consider allowing earlier (day) burning
 - Communication among all burners (FS, Tribes, etc.)
 - Registry for Sensitive Individuals and a notification process.
 - More education

- Define sensitive geographic areas
- Earlier notification if it looks like there may not be enough burn days - - so farmers can go to Plan B.

Suggestions for proposed language

Consensus: The group approved the following items to consider as they develop draft language. This was done through a consensus development process called “Levels of Agreement”. Items received strong consensus support. Item 5 received weak support, but were within the parameters of “consensus” to move forward for further review.

1. Ecology should produce a preamble which will outline the objectives, goals, and an understanding of the potential conflicts between farming and health concerns.
2. Rules should indicate that Ecology should monitor and use the data to determine the daily burn decision.
3. The Rules should not limit the ability to adjust to improved technology.
4. There should be a daily burn decision process in place that can be updated and improved as needed. Federal standards should be one of the considerations.
5. Ecology should consider setting a numerical standard / action level.

The group also discussed things that may happen in the future that they should be aware of as they set the rules – such as Ecology may need to decide who can burn in the future, not just when.

Review of draft language

The group discussed the draft language that had been distributed prior to the meeting. Following in-depth discussion, the group decided that Harrow dump will go in the BMP category and Melissa will develop definitions for fence line and bale burns.

Wrap-up

Lori reviewed the decisions and action items. The next meeting is set for June 22nd. Materials will be sent out one week prior to the meeting.